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life; taxation of luxuries; taxation of property; taxation of incomes: tax shifted to consumer to landowner to employer of labor.

The author in his treatment of tariff reform discusses in a clear and interesting way the national state-building aim of the merchantilist policy, and its relation to trade, manufactures, and the navy.

RAYMOND V. PHELAN.

University of Minnesota.

*The Enforcement of the Statutes of Labourers, in Decade 1349-59*  
By BERTHA HAVEN PUTNAM, Instructor in History, Mount Holyoke College. Vol. XXXII, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1908. Pp. 705. \$4.)

This is a very scholarly study of administration, based chiefly on manuscript sources to be found in the Public Record Office, London. The official records valuable for a study of the administration of the statutes of labourers, fall into three main classes: those of the central government; those of the old local courts, communal, seigniorial, and municipal; those of the church. Owing to limitations on her stay in England, Dr. Putnam omitted to study the administration of the statutes of labourers by the church, as the material for such a study is scattered throughout the country. Neither has she attempted to deal thoroughly with the old local courts, since so small a proportion of their rolls are in the Public Record Office. She points out that her sources represent only a small proportion of similar proceedings that were going on all over England.

The author gives an interesting and serviceable account of sources as a preface to the 463 pages of documents, extracts from documents, lists and tables, which she has interspersed with summaries and critical comments.

With respect to the attempt under the statutes of labourers to keep wages and prices at the rates prevailing before the great Black Plague robbed England of perhaps half of its population, Dr. Putnam says in conclusion that "authoritative statements will be warranted only after an exhaustive study of the available sources has resulted in statistics, but the subject is so full of complexities

that even with statistics a decisive opinion will not be easily formed."

The case against the English government as regards these statutes rests upon two counts: first, the statutory rates of wages recurred to obsolete standards; second, the apparent fairness growing out of the regulation of prices as well as of wages is misleading, since the specifically regulated prices referred for the most part to goods sold directly by the producers of such goods, while prices of victuals etc., were to be "reasonable." In defense of the government, the author contends that so great were the demands of producers and laborers that the country was confronted with an emergency involving real danger and that in such an age when as yet the idea of competitive price had not been developed, and when as a normal thing local authorities regulated both wages and prices, it was natural and equitable that the government should attempt to meet this emergency. In extenuation of this point, Dr. Putnam says that "The evidence of the records examined in this investigation goes to show that the attempt was honestly meant to include prices as well as wages whenever there had been a rise in the former also; under these circumstances," she continues, "it seems unreasonable to consider such an attempt as unfair oppression of the working classes. From the point of view of justice, she adds, "the inequity of the low statutory rates of wages was surpassed by the exorbitance of the demands of the labourers" (pp. 219-20).

As to the success of the statutes of labourers in the period 1349-1359 the author says: "The figures of the amounts of the penalties as far as they have been ascertained and the eagerness to establish a right to the penalties shown by the taxpayers in relation to the subsidies, by the lords in their claims and by the exchequer at every stage, give a vivid impression of the importance of the statutes in the eyes of the community and afford conclusive proof that they were not at this time dead letters" (p. 149). Again, "The large number of justices appointed within a short interval to enforce the laws, the existing records of their sessions, the references to similar records that have ceased to exist, the entries for the payment of their wages—convincing proof of the regularity of their sessions—the importance to various claimants of the penalties imposed by the justices—chiefly as has appeared, for the receipt of excess wages and prices—the figures of the amounts of these penalties—

evidence of the large sums actually levied on the labouring classes—all these facts point to the zealous administration of this portion of the enactments. To the work of the special justices in convicting labourers must be added the occasional efforts of the old local courts, while the importance of the action of the upper courts in attempting to compel employers as well as employees to obey the law cannot easily be overestimated. In view of the cumulative evidence it is impossible to doubt that during this first decade the wages and prices clauses were thoroughly enforced. . . . wages were not kept at the statutory level, but they were kept for ten years at a lower level than would have resulted from a régime of free competition" (pp. 220, 21).

With regard to the statutes and the decay of the system of villeinage, the author says that while the specification that a lord could keep only as many villeins as he actually needed was theoretically a direct interference with the relation between lord and villein, and might conceivably have tended to break down the old system, yet the conservative attitude taken by the upper courts on this question as shown by their decision that a lord might recapture his villein, notwithstanding a statutory contract between the latter and another employer, "necessitates some considerable modification of the statement that the Edwardian statutes struck a very heavy blow at the whole fabric of the manorial system." With reference to the other side of the question, "The fact that villeins were being tried and convicted by the justices of labourers exactly like free men, and that they were themselves bringing audacious suits in quarter sessions against their own masters; the fact that these masters evidently preferred to leave to the crown-appointed official the brunt of the work of enforcing these measures against their tenants whether free or bond, while they themselves merely received the fiscal profits resulting from such convictions; these facts, as well as many others, all point in the same direction. The cataclysm of the Black Death had hastened the breakdown of the old system and had accelerated changes in economic and social relations throughout the country." The statute of labourers did not establish a new economic system; it only afforded proof of the coming of a new era (pp. 222, 223).

Dr. Putnam points out that in the manuscript sources from which she has drawn in giving an exposition of administrative

methods there is an almost inexhaustible wealth of material for statistics of wages and prices, and for detailed explanation of the manner of life of the English masses in the years following the Black Death.

RAYMOND V. PHELAN.

University of Minnesota.

*A Congressional History of Railways in the United States.* By LEWIS H. HANEY. Vol. I. (Reprinted from Vol. 3 of the Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, Economics and Political Science Series. Madison, Wis.: 1908. Pp. 273).

In this volume Professor Haney presents the first installment of a three volume work, in which he carries the congressional history of railways down to 1850. The second volume will cover the period from 1850 to 1887, and the third will bring the history down to date. The present volume is divided into three "books," which deal respectively with the Rise of the Railway Question, Aid to Railways, and Railways to the Pacific, in so far as these questions came before Congress. As is indicated in the title, the work is a study of Congress and the railway, and to a lesser degree a history of the railway as illustrated by congressional debates and legislation. In the preparation of this volume the author has made a most exhaustive study of congressional sources, as well as secondary material, and has supported practically every statement by footnote references which crowd the pages and give a most Teutonic appearance to the book. His industry and his patience must be commended, for he has rendered it unnecessary for any subsequent student to repeat his rather dreary task. Apparently no bill concerning any railway scheme that was ever introduced into Congress by any member, or the report of any committee on this subject, has escaped him. Bills that were pigeon-holed in committee rooms are discussed as well as those that were actually enacted into law.

It is on this point that the first criticism of Professor Haney's book must be made. To the reviewer the author's industry seems to have outrun his judgment. It is not sufficient to chronicle every word spoken in Congress on the subject; we must know what authority attaches to them and what effects they had. The answer